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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2006

News and Resources for Sustainable Development

October 2006 News

Here are this month's picks for news and resources on sustainable development, economic development, public policy, funding opportunities and related events in or near Connecticut. If you haven't already, [please subscribe](#) to "News and Resources" to be included in future distributions of this newsletter (it's still free)!

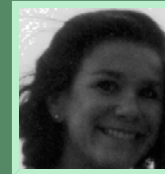
Sustainable Development

"This is Smart Growth" - ICMA, the International City/County Management Association and the Smart Growth Network recently released "This Is Smart Growth," a new publication that illustrates how communities can turn their visions, values, and aspirations into reality, using smart growth techniques to improve the quality of development. Many people want to know what smart growth looks like; "This Is Smart Growth" illustrates and explains smart growth concepts and outcomes. Free copies are available from the EPA National Service Center for Environmental Publications at 800-490-9198 or via e-mail at ncepimal@one.net. Ask for publication number 231-K-06-002. "This Is Smart Growth" is available electronically at www.smartgrowth.org.

EPA awards for Best Workplaces for Commuters - Each year, the congestion created from commuting to and from work causes 3.7 billion hours of lost productivity, costing employees 92 million work weeks, and the nation \$63.1 billion in wasted time and fuel. It doesn't have to be that way. The EPA released its annual list of Best Workplaces for Commuters from the Fortune 500 companies. This year, 133 companies employing more than 700,000 workers qualify. The top 20 employers are ranked by the percentage of domestic employees who are eligible for commuter benefits, such as subsidized transit passes, telework, carpool programs, and emergency rides home. [More](#). And check out [New England's Best Workplaces for Commuters](#) too.

President Signs Bill Expanding Conservation Tax Incentive - On August 17, President Bush signed into law legislation that included an improved conservation tax incentive. The provision, which expires at the end of 2007, will: Increase the charitable deduction limit from 30% to 50% of adjusted gross income; Increase the charitable deduction

About Me



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limit to 100% of AGI for eligible farmers and ranchers; and Allow the taxpayer to carry forward the deduction for 15 years (rather than five years). [More](#)

Public Policy

Tax Foundation Ranks Connecticut's Business Climate at 37 - This is one case where a higher number is not good. The Tax Foundation's business climate index is based on analyses of 113 factors, grouped by corporate, individual income, sales, unemployment and property taxes. "The best states in the Index are those that levy taxes on a broad base and at a low rate," says a co-author of the report. Tax Foundation's [Executive summary](#); [Full report](#). Related: [Are a "Good Business Climate" and a High "Quality of Life" Mutually Exclusive?](#) Not if You're New Hampshire.

INC Magazine Gives Rell a 2-Star Rating - INC Magazine took a good hard look at the country's 26 governors up for reelection to see where they really stand on support for small business. Instead of looking at what they promise during campaign season or when they're riding the good news bus, INC ranked governors on their actual records for how well or poorly they support entrepreneurial activity and business ownership. Inc gave Governor Rell two stars. And she didn't make the cut for any of INC's "best of" lists, covering topics like technology transfer, health care, or fiscal policy. [Rating the Governors](#). Related: [The 2-Star State?](#)

Brookings ID's Weak Market Cities (and they include Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport) - After ranking 302 cities nationwide based on economic (employment growth, establishment growth, payroll growth) and residential well-being (income, unemployment rate, poverty rate, labor force participation) indicators, Brookings defined 65 cities as "weak market". Weak market cities are those that ranked in the bottom third across both sets of indicators.

- A strong city depends on a strong metropolitan region - and the ability to capture a critical share of the metro economy. Out-migration, racial and ethnic segregation, and concentrated poverty have negative impacts on schools, public safety, market investment, fiscal health, and quality of life.
- As the quality of human capital, costs of doing business, and amenities are correlated with metro/city performance over time, these cities can become mired in a downward spiral.
- In addition, major federal and state policies often stack the deck against cities - beginning with fragmented government on the state end, skewing funding toward greenfield development, and setting up barriers to brownfield redevelopment.
- Plus the cities themselves are often dysfunctional.
- Small and mid-sized cities may be less resilient against economic downturns, plant closings and major downsizings, and generally have "thinner" job markets.
- So how can city and state leaders fix what's broken, capitalize

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on urban assets, and help foster city and regional prosperity?

[Read on](#) (go to slide 50 for Brookings recommendations).

Affordable Housing: Managing the Message - Word choice, stories and images can have a remarkable effect on how the public views "affordable housing." [More](#)

Connecticut: 3rd Smartest State for 2006 - Down from 2nd in 2005 :
(

For the second consecutive year, Vermont has earned the title of the nation's Smartest State, as announced in [Education State Rankings 2006-2007](#), a new reference book from Morgan Quitno Press. "Vermont produces stellar students, thanks to its commitment to high quality elementary and secondary education," said Scott Morgan, President of Morgan Quitno Press. The 2006 award measures states based on factors including expenditures for instruction, pupil-teacher ratios, high school graduation and dropout rates, and reading, writing and math proficiency. Rounding out the top five states with Vermont were Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Maine. Bringing up the lower end of the rankings scale were Arizona in last place, preceded by Nevada, Mississippi, California and Alaska. [More](#).

Solving the School Funding Crisis - Speaking of our commitment to high quality education, the [Citizens Network of the Capital Region](#), greater Hartford's new citizens' league, has a new online survey to learn more about the public's preferences for solutions to Connecticut's school funding problem. You can weigh in anonymously; it'll take only a minute or two. [Click here for the survey](#).

Funding

Environmental Literacy Grants for Formal K-12 Education - The NOAA Office of Education is requesting applications for two environmental literacy projects - one in support of K-12 education, and another in support of "free-choice" learning. Funded projects will last between one and five years. The K-12 projects must propose ways to expand the amount of Earth System Science taught in the classroom to improve student learning of that subject.

Free-Choice Learning projects should support NOAA's vision which is: an informed society that uses a comprehensive understanding of the role of the ocean, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem to make the best social and economic decisions. Successful projects should reach significant segments of the U.S. population at a State, multi-state or national level.

This funding opportunity meets NOAA's Mission Goal to understand climate variability and change to enhance society's ability to plan and respond. Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, K through 12 public and independent schools and school systems, science centers and museums, other nonprofits, and State, local and Indian tribal governments in the United States. An estimated six awards will

be made, ranging from \$200,000 to \$750,000. Pre-proposals due Nov. 29. [More](#)

Events

Nov. 2 - Get Sewer Savvy - 12:30 - 2 pm, Hartford Public Library
A referendum on the MDC's \$1.6 billion Clean Water Project will be held on Nov. 7. The project will correct serious problems in the 150 year old combined sewer system in Hartford. An MDC official will describe the project and a panel will discuss it from the perspectives of Hartford's neighborhoods, urban design, and environmental impact. [More](#)

Nov. 6 - KnowledgePlex Expert Chat - Reclaiming vacant and abandoned properties to create affordable homes, 2pm
Reclaiming vacant and abandoned properties to create affordable homes is one innovative way to address the affordable housing challenge. KnowledgePlex will present an online chat featuring representatives from the organizations that won top honors in the Maxwell Awards, presented by the Fannie Mae Foundation in partnership with the National Vacant Properties Campaign. [More](#)

Nov. 8 - Building Tomorrow's Workforce - 6 - 7:30 pm, Hartford Public Library
Most of Connecticut's future workforce will have to come from Hartford and the other large cities in the state. Less than half of the third graders in Hartford today will graduate from high school. That's a problem that will have massive implications for Connecticut's future economic development and quality of life. In this HartfordInfo Today session, business, education, and government leaders will discuss this important issue and possible strategies for addressing it. [More](#)

Nov. 13-14 - Leading Practices in Smart Growth Symposium - Boston, MA.
The Leading Practices in Smart Growth Symposium is presented by ICMA University with support from the Smart Growth Network and the U.S. EPA. This symposium will be held in conjunction with the Brownfields 2006 conference in Boston. [More](#).

Nov. 13-15 - Brownfields 2006 - Boston, MA - A Revolution in Redevelopment and Revitalization. Opening Keynote Address Featuring Michael Porter, Harvard Business School, and father of the cluster theory of economic development. Looks like a top notch program. Check it out. AND IT'S FREE! Hurry - registration ends Oct. 25. [More](#)

Nov. 14 - CT Earth Net - Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven, 8:30 - 1:30 pm - Half-day meeting of environmental advocates, community activities, educators, and concerned individuals about collaborating to accomplish shared objectives. RSVP by Nov. 3 to Brendan Hanrahan at bhanrahan@ctearthnet.org. See <http://www.ctearthnet.org/> and <http://cttrips.blogspot.com>.

Nov. 30 - Benchmarking Connecticut 2006 - Northeast Utilities, Berlin - The key findings of CERC's [2006 research initiative](#) will be released on Thursday, November 30, 2006 at CERC's 2nd annual

Benchmarking conference. Bruce Katz, Vice President at the Brookings Institution and founding Director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, is the scheduled keynote speaker. Stay tuned for more details.

posted by Kelly Kennedy @ 8:45 PM

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